



POLMED[®]

OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE



YOUR CARE POLMED

October 2025

“Attitude is a little thing
that makes a big
difference.”

Winston Churchill

Dear POLMED Member,

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to think pink and shine a light on the most commonly diagnosed cancer among South African women. Early detection saves lives, and this month we feature essential insights into risk factors, screening options, and how self-examinations can empower you to take charge of your health.

In this edition, we also cover other important health topics that highlight the value of knowledge and small actions with our infographics: Mind Over Stigma: Why World Mental Health Day Matters and Diabetes and Exercise: Small Steps, Big Results.

Remember, every step towards awareness is a step toward wellness. Wishing you a healthy month ahead.

Yours in health,
The YourCare Team

In this issue...

THINK PINK: EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

Breast Cancer Awareness Month, commemorated in October, aims to shed light on the most commonly diagnosed cancer in South Africa, and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in the country.

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DIABETES AND EXERCISE: SMALL STEPS BIG RESULTS

Diabetes is the leading cause of death in the country. Just over 2 million South Africans, are affected and living with it. However, with lifestyle modifications, those living with diabetes can better manage the condition and protect their health.

> [READ MORE...](#)

MIND OVER STIGMA: WHY WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY MATTERS

Observed in October, World Mental Health Day is a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness around mental health and encouraging efforts to support mental wellbeing, a significant component of our overall wellbeing and quality of life.

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Think Pink: Early detection saves lives

Breast Cancer Awareness Month, commemorated in October, aims to shed light on the most commonly diagnosed cancer in South Africa, and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in the country.



RISK FACTORS

These include:

AGE

Risk increases with age. Most women with breast cancer are diagnosed after the age of 40, but there are some women who are diagnosed at younger ages.

RACE

White women are at higher risk.

FAMILY HISTORY

Having an immediate relative with breast cancer (mom, sister) raises your chances of developing breast cancer too.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Obesity, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol consumption, and smoking are linked to a higher likelihood of developing breast cancer.



EARLY DETECTION

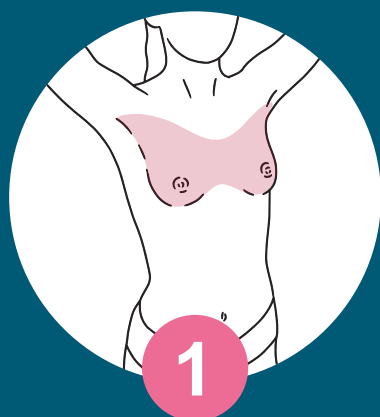
Women are encouraged to undergo regular checkups and screenings, to ensure early detection and appropriate treatment.

Not all breast lumps are cancerous. Most lumps are benign, like cysts (fluid-filled sacs) or fibroadenomas (non-cancerous growths). These can easily be monitored if they are small and not bothersome, or removed if they are big and causing discomfort.

Mammograms are generally done in women who are aged 40 years and older. This is because the breast tissue is less dense, making it easier to pick up any abnormalities. In women under 40 who are suspected of having breast cancer, breast ultrasounds (sonars) are usually done first, and if concerning, a mammogram can be recommended.



Self-examinations can also play a key role in early detection (to be done once a month):



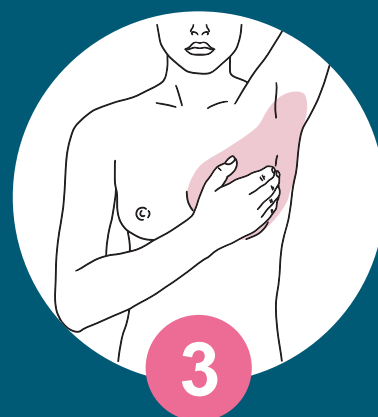
1 Standing in front of the mirror:

Straighten your shoulders, place your hands on your hips, and look for changes in size, shape or colour. Check for nipple discharge. Then, raise your arms and repeat. Unless you are breastfeeding there should normally not be any nipple discharge from the breasts.



2 Lying down with a pillow:

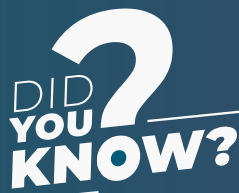
Place a pillow under your right shoulder and your right arm behind your head. Using your left hand, gently, but firmly, press your three middle fingers down on and around the entire right breast and armpit area. A lump will feel either round, soft and movable, or painful, immobile and hard. Do the same on the left, using your right hand.



3 Standing in the shower:

Stand in the shower with one arm raised behind your head and use the opposite hand to examine the breast and armpit area, repeating the same technique described in point 2. Repeat this on the other side as well.

Education is at the forefront of breast cancer awareness. Think pink and make a difference in the fight against breast cancer.



POLMED covers mammograms under the Preventative Care Benefit!

Eligible members:

- Women aged 40 to 74 years
- Once every two years — unless a medical motivation is provided for more frequent screening.

Take charge of your health and book your mammogram today.

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-08-00/03-08-002023.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/breast-cancer/risk-factors/index.html>
- <https://cansa.org.za/breast-cancer/>
- <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-stage-1/>
- <https://ecancer.org/en/news/23954-regular-screening-mammograms-significantly-reduce-breast-cancer-deaths>
- <https://cansa.org.za/steps-how-to-do-a-breast-self-examination-bse/>

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Diabetes and Exercise: Small Steps Big Results

Diabetes is the leading cause of death in the country.

Just over 2 million
South Africans, are affected and living with it.



However, with lifestyle modifications, those living with diabetes can better manage the condition and protect their health.

One of these is regular exercise. Benefits include:



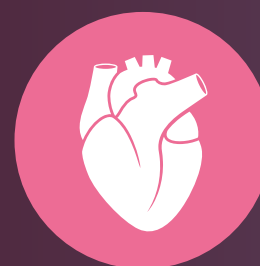
Improved blood sugar levels
Exercise draws on the muscles to use glucose for energy.



Reduced insulin resistance
This hormone helps to regulate blood sugar.



A healthy weight
Excess weight can make it more difficult to manage blood sugar.



A healthier heart
Those living with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease.

LOVE IT, LIVE IT

Exercise can sometimes be daunting, but you don't need to run a marathon. Just 30 minutes of moderate activity, five days a week, can make a significant difference. Walking, dancing, swimming, cycling, or even gardening are great ways to move your body. If 30 minutes at once feels overwhelming, break it into shorter, 10-minute sessions throughout the day.

Keep track of your progress in a journal or app, to celebrate milestones.

Here are some tips for keeping active:



Start small: Set realistic and achievable targets, such as exercising for 15 minutes a day, and then gradually increase intensity and duration.



Make it fun: Find something you enjoy. Walk with a friend, or listen to music while exercising.



Monitor blood sugar: Keep track of your blood glucose levels before and after exercising.



Stay hydrated: Be sure to drink water before, during and after activity.



Use proper footwear: Those living with diabetes may experience sensitivity in their feet, so wear shoes that fit well.



Consult your doctor: Before beginning a new exercise routine, always check with your healthcare provider.

Exercise is a powerful, natural way to manage diabetes. Every step counts towards better health.

Diabetic Registration Process for POLMED ADRM

Step-by-Step Guide:

1 Diagnosis Confirmation:

- You must have a confirmed diagnosis of diabetes (Type 1 or Type 2) from a registered healthcare provider.

2 Chronic Medicine Registration:

- Email your chronic medication application to: polmedcmm@medscheme.co.za
- Include your doctor's prescription and relevant medical reports

3 ADRM Programme Enrollment:

- Once your chronic condition is registered, you can be enrolled in the ADRM Programme.
- Email: polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za to initiate registration or request support.

4 Care Plan Activation:

Upon successful registration, you'll receive a Care Plan that includes:

- Consultations with healthcare providers
- Blood tests (e.g., HbA1c)
- Radiological tests (if needed)
- Nutritional and lifestyle support (YOUR CARE POLMED)

5 Ongoing Monitoring:

- Your condition will be monitored regularly, and updates to your Care Plan may be made based on your health status.

REFERENCES:

- <https://idf.org/our-network/regions-and-members/africa/members/south-africa/>
- <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03093/P030932020.pdf>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK549946/>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-importance-of-exercise-when-you-have-diabetes>
- <https://diabetes.org/health-wellness/fitness/blood-glucose-and-exercise>
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/diabetes/diabetes-and-heart-disease>

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If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za with your membership number and contact details.

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Mind Over Stigma: Why World Mental Health Day Matters

Observed in October, World Mental Health Day is a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness around mental health and encouraging efforts to support mental wellbeing, a significant component of our overall wellbeing and quality of life.

With nearly one in three South African adults living with impaired mental health, this campaign highlights the importance of treating mental health and wellness as a universal human right.



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY AIMS TO IMPROVE GLOBAL WELLNESS BY:

RAISING AWARENESS

With one in five South Africans expected to experience poor mental health at some point in their lives, education and awareness around conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and bipolar mood disorders is key. It's also crucial to highlight the importance of early intervention, self-care therapies, and seeking help.

REDUCING STIGMA

Despite growing conversations around mental health, stigma still prevents many individuals from speaking up or seeking treatment. Research suggests that while 70% of women and 65% of men report a need for mental health support, men are four times more likely to die by suicide than women.

PROMOTING ACTION

Mental health conditions affect one in four South Africans, yet access to care and funding remain limited. By raising awareness, starting conversations, and fostering understanding in our workplaces, schools, and communities, we can help build a society that values mental wellbeing as deeply as physical health.

SUPPORTING GLOBAL UNITY

Poor mental health can affect anyone, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or ethnicity. With so many countries participating in World Mental Health Day, a shared commitment to improving mental wellbeing reinforces international solidarity and reminds us that we're not alone.

But World Mental Health Day is more than just one day. It's a global commitment to ensuring that mental health is recognised, respected and supported throughout the year.



If you've been diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), you can register on POLMED's Disease Management Programme. We're here to support you with:

- A personalised care plan will be issued for out-of-hospital treatment.
- Telephonic support by a mental health case manager.
- Paid from risk, so your out-of-hospital benefits will not be affected.

To register:

Email: polmeddiseasemanagement@medscheme.co.za | Call: **0860 765 633**

Take the first step toward better mental health support today!

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2022.986531/full>
- https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/Mental%20Health%20Situational%20Analysis%20South%20Africa%20final%20Report_May%202024.pdf